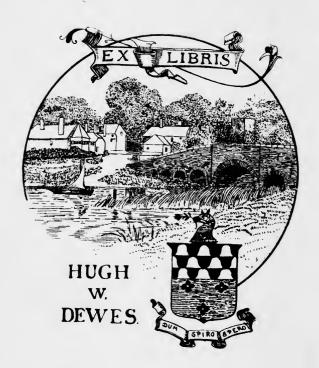




OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES



B





















BY

## Onuer-Wenden-Homes-



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953 H753 Bevery Frams. Man. July 12 1 1894 las 1894 MAIN My dear Publishers and Friend I have read the proof you send me and find nothing in it which I feel called upon to alter or explain. There lasted long energh to serve as an itentiation of ony an from. I am one of the very last of the leaves which still cling to the bough of life that budded in the Spring of the nine tenth century The days of my years are three some and Tounty, and I am almos halfway up the steep incline Which lands me toward the bace of the new century so near to which I have already climbed. from carrying with it the marks of the been written or the journe morning of the is still zead and cound for. It whith a smile on my by That I wrote it; I cannot count to without a sigh of tender zemembrane



Those it will not sadden my older ceader, while it may amuse some of the younger ones to whom its experience are as yet only flowing funcies.

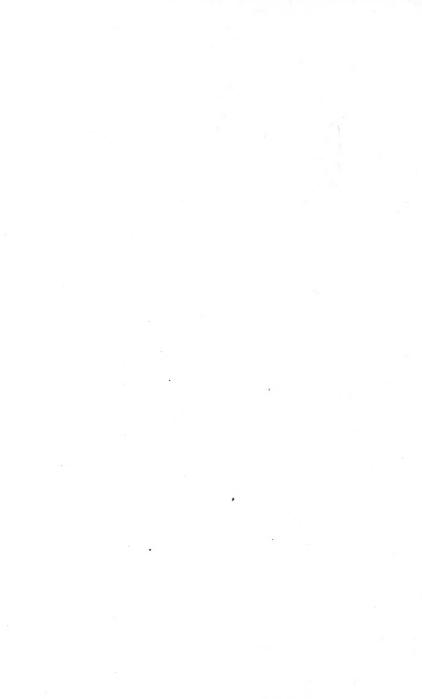
Oliver Wendell Hormes



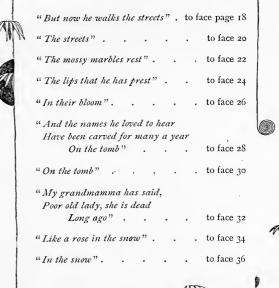


"That he had a roman nose, And his cheek was like a rose In the snow" Frontispiece.
Preface
The Last Leaf 6
The Last Leaf, continued 7
The Last Leaf, concluded 8
Half-Title
"I saw him once before, As he passed by the door" . to face page 10
"They say that in his prime, Ere the pruning-knife of Time Cut him down,
Not a better man was found". to face 12
"By the Crier on his round" to face 14
"Through the town" to face 16









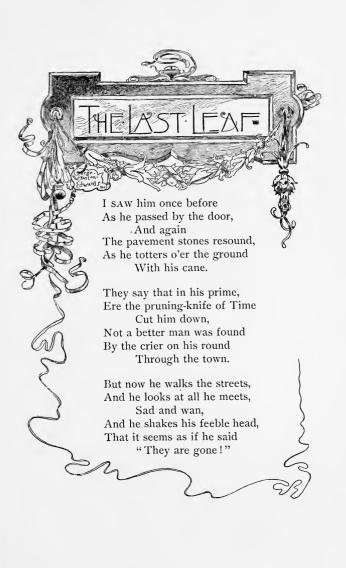




## Witations-

"But now his nose is thin, And it rests upon his chin Like a staff"	to	fa	.ce	page	38
"The old three-cornered hat And the breeches and all that Are so queer".			to	face	40
"If I should live to be The last leaf upon the tree In the spring".			to	face	42
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History of the poem, concluded					55





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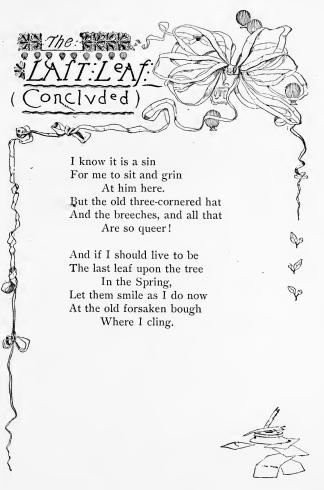


The mossy marbles rest
On the lips that he has prest
In their bloom,
And the names he loved to hear
Have been carved for many a year
On the tomb.

My grandmamma has said —
Poor old lady, she is dead
Long ago, —
That he had a Roman nose;
And his cheek was like a rose
In the snow.

But now his nose is thin,
And it rests upon his chin
Like a staff,
And a crook is in his back,
And a melancholy crack
In his laugh.











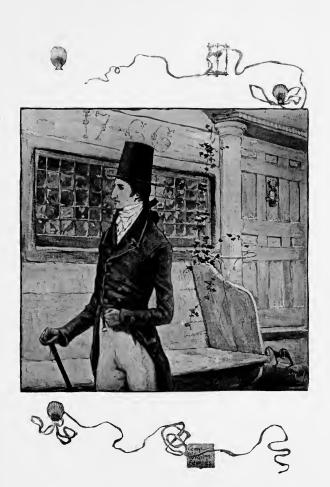








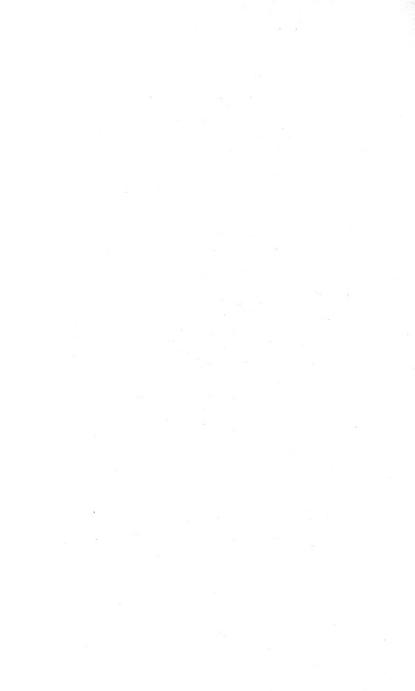


















Through the town -



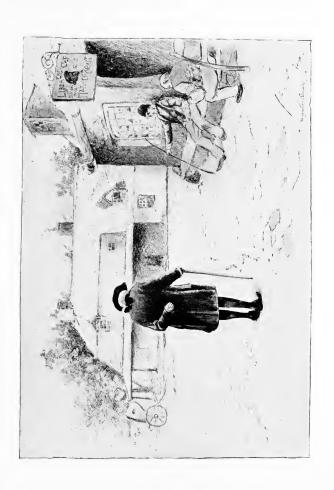




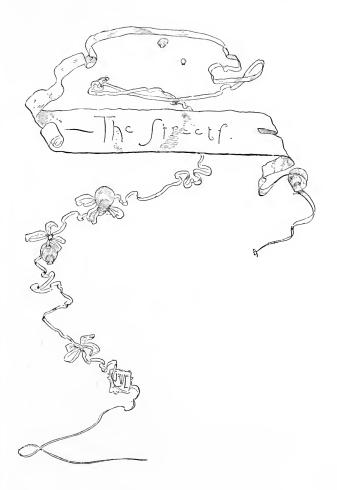


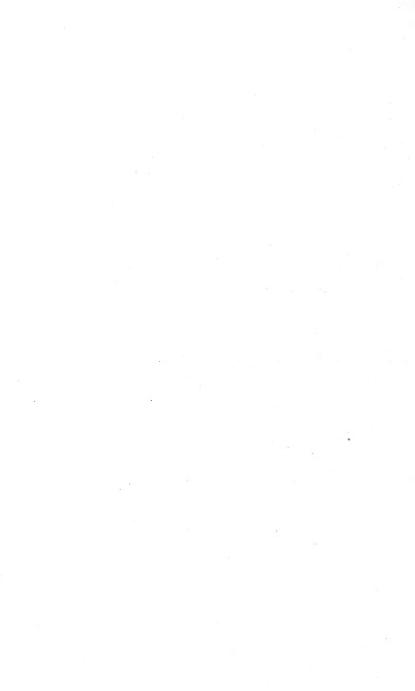


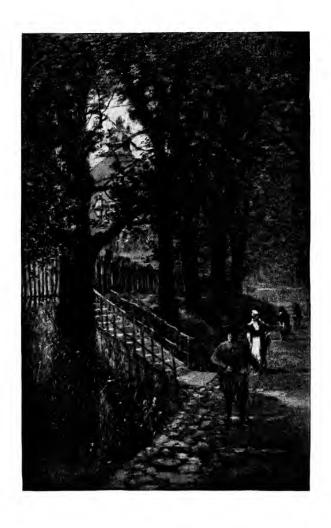




















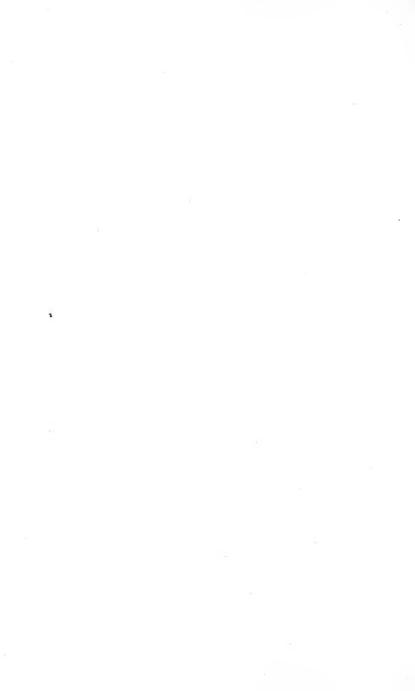


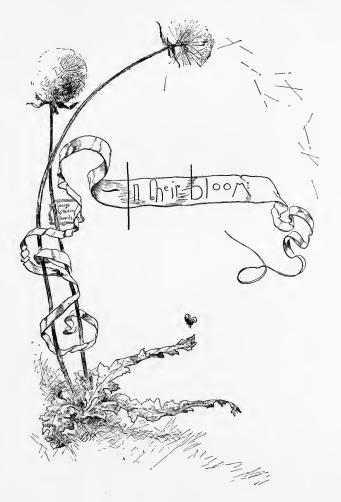










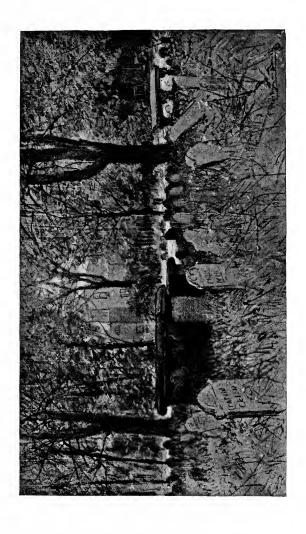


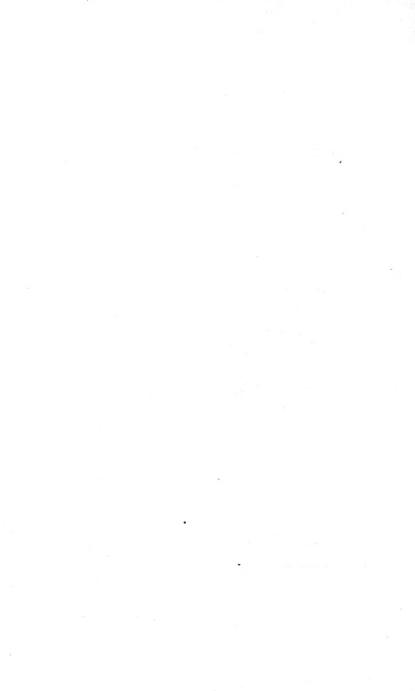
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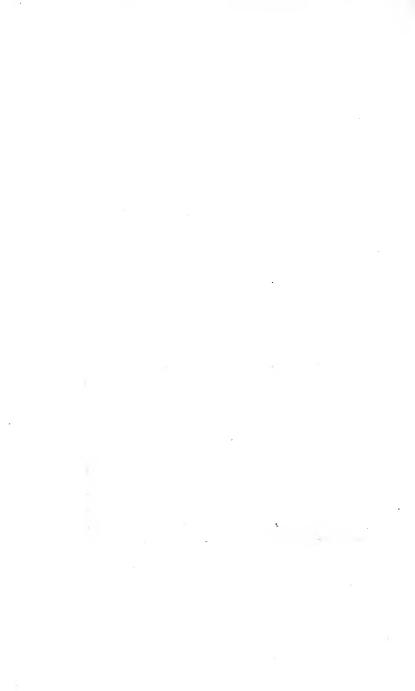










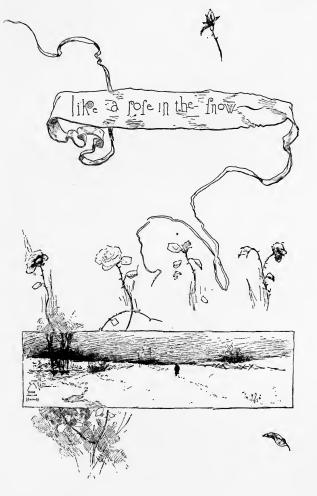






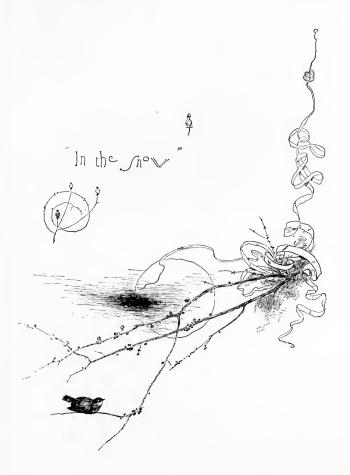
























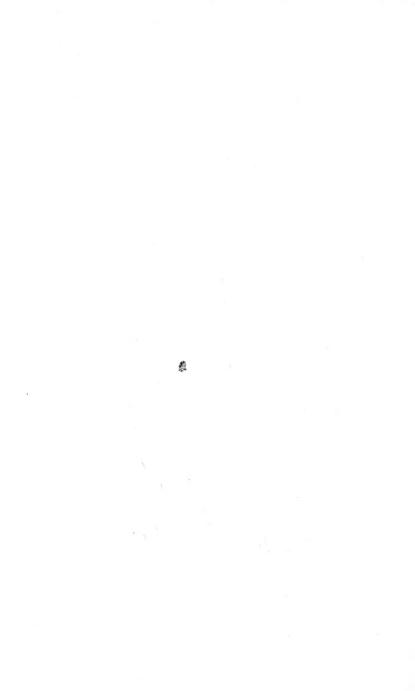


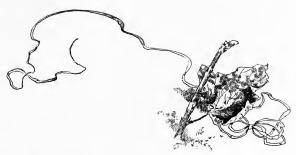












- If I should live to be
The last leaf upon the tree
In the Spring. —









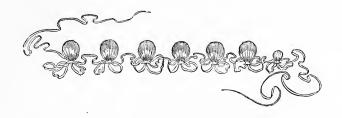






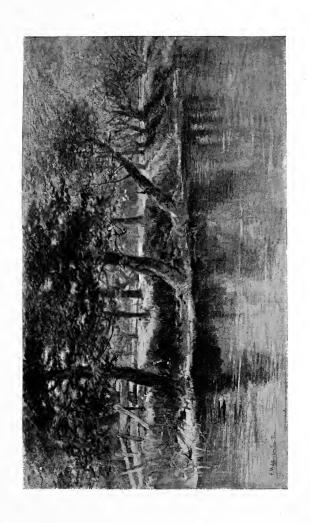












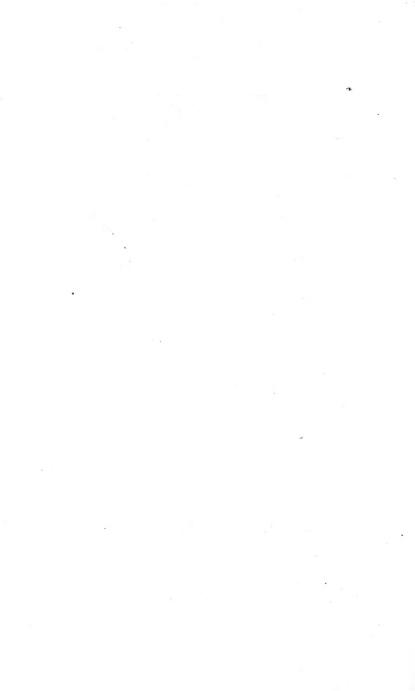


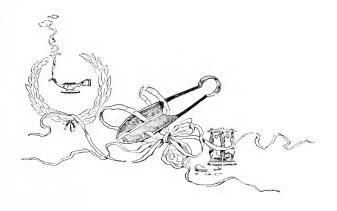






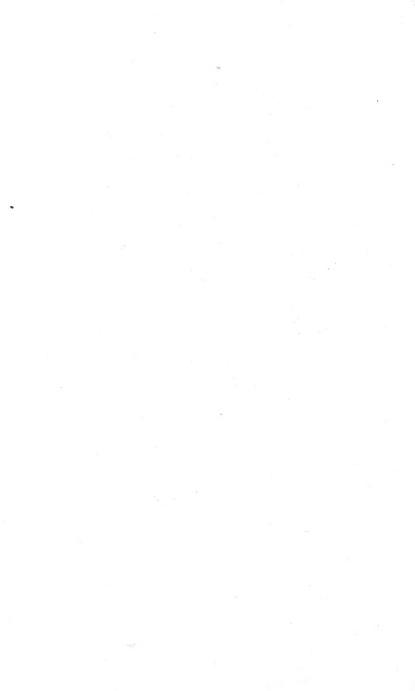


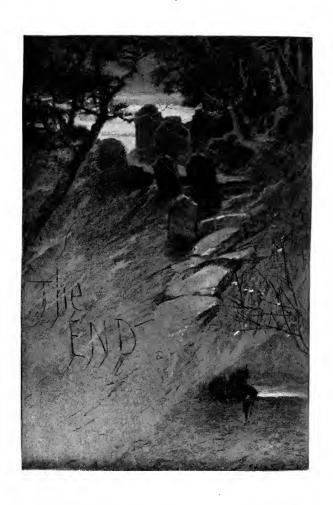






THE







## THE HISTORY OF THIS POEM.

My publishers tell me that it would add to the interest of the Poem if I would mention any circumstances connected with its composition, publication, and reception. request must be the excuse of my communicative-

ness. Just when it was written I cannot exactly say, nor in what paper or periodical it was first published. It must have been written before April, 1833; probably in 1831 or 1832. It was republished in the first edition

of my poems, in the year 1836.

The Poem was suggested by the sight of a figure well known to Bostonians of the years just mentioned, that of Major Thomas Melville, "the last of the cocked hats," as he was sometimes called. The Major had been a personable young man, very evidently, and retained evidence of it in

"The monumental pomp of age," -

which had something imposing and something odd about it for youthful eyes like mine. He was often pointed at as one of the "Indians" of the famous "Boston Tea-Party" of 1774. His aspect among the crowds of a later generation reminded me of a withered leaf which has held to its stem through the storms of autumn and winter, and finds itself still clinging to its bough while the new growths of spring are bursting their buds and spreading their foliage all around it. I make this explanation for the benefit of those who have been puzzled by the lines

> The last leaf upon the tree In the Spring.

The way in which it came to be written in a somewhat singular measure was this. I had become a little known as a versifier, and I thought that one or





two other young writers were following my efforts with imitations, not meant as parodies and hardly to be considered improvements on their models. I determined to write in a measure which would at once betray any copyist. So far as it was suggested by any previous poem, the echo must have come from Campbell's "Battle of the Baltic," with its short terminal lines, such as the last of these two,

By thy wild and stormy steep, Elsinore.

But I do not remember any poem in the same measure, except such as have been written since its publication.

The Poem as first written had one of those false rhymes which produce a shudder in all educated persons, even in the Poems of Keats and others who ought to have known better than to admit them.

The guilty verse ran thus:—

But now he walks the streets And he looks at all he meets So forlorn, And he shakes his feeble head That it seems as if he said "They are gone!"

A little more experience, to say nothing of the sneer of an American critic in an English periodical, showed me that this would never do. Here was what is called a "cockney rhyme,"—one in which the sound of the letter r is neglected,—maltreated as the letter  $\hbar$  is insulted by the average Briton by leaving it out everywhere except where it should be silent. Such an ill-mated pair as "forlorn" and "gone" could not possibly pass current in good rhyming society. But what to do about it was the question. I must keep

"They are gone!"

and I could not think of any rhyme which I could





